

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Karen Larimore Wilkinson

Public Information and Communications Manager

City of Salisbury

217 S. Main Street

Salisbury, North Carolina 28144

Work Phone: 704-638-2113 Cell: 704-213-1050

Home Phone: 704-633-7123

Information: <http://www.salisburync.gov>

Work Email Contact: kwilk@salisburync.gov

City of Salisbury to Host NC Metropolitan Coalition Mayors' Press Conference to Communicate Strong Anti-Gang Legislation Support to Lawmakers

NC Mayors Band Together to Promote Dedication to State Street Gang Prevention Acts

Salisbury, NC_June 27, 2007 – Salisbury Mayor Susan Kluttz announced today that the City of Salisbury will host a North Carolina Metropolitan Coalition Mayors' Press Conference on Monday, July 2, 2007 at 11:30 a.m., Salisbury City Hall, 217 S. Main Street. The press conference, to be held in the first floor lobby, will highlight the presence of gangs throughout North Carolina cities and towns and urge passage of a state-wide law which would attack the criminal activities and organizational structure of gangs.

The Salisbury press conference will be the second of the day dedicated to gaining legislative support for bills aimed at suppressing gang violence. Mayor Keith Holliday will host a press conference at the Folk Teen Recreation Center in Greensboro, earlier that morning at 9:30 a.m. Mayors of the North Carolina Metropolitan Coalition hope to communicate strong support for anti-gang legislation, to state lawmakers. House Bill 274 and Senate Bill 1358 offer suppression tools to attack encouragement and coercion into gang participation. Both bills also provide strict punishment for threatening someone that may be attempting to withdraw from a gang and offer enhanced criminal offenses for crimes associated with gang activity.

Mayor Kluttz, speaking on the heels of a successful community wide gangs and youth violence summit, held earlier this month in Salisbury, shares, "I am truly proud of the Salisbury-Rowan community and the outstanding support and feedback which we have received from concerned citizens, churches, civic groups, law enforcement, schools, agencies, local businesses, youth services, mentors and so many more. Due to record attendance, the Salisbury-Rowan United summit offered two locations, both encompassing widely diverse audiences and by gathering for one common cause, the combined accomplishments of these citizens can be many. This tremendous outpouring of community support confirms for me, both personally and as Mayor, that together we can create positive solutions for deterring youth violence and gang activity in Salisbury-Rowan. In addition, we implore our state legislature to enact these anti-gang bills which

will help provide safer communities for all citizens throughout North Carolina.” Mayor Kluttz adds that citizen feedback received at the summit is currently being utilized to create a Community Action Plan. Once the plan has been initiated, interested parties will have the opportunity to volunteer, mentor, support an established program or assist with the creation of a new youth initiative.

The press conference is to be attended and supported by North Carolina dignitaries including Representative Lorene Coates, Representative Fred Steen, Senator Andrew Brock, and Deputy State Director Reggie Holley, with the office of Senator Elizabeth Dole. In addition, neighboring and fellow Metropolitan Coalition Mayors in attendance will include Mayor Pat McCrory of Charlotte, Mayor Jennifer Stultz of Gastonia, Mayor Allen Joines of Winston Salem, Mayor Alicia Bean of Spencer, Mayor Scott Padgett of Concord, and the Mayor of Scotland Neck, Robert Partin, who also serves as President of the NC League of Municipalities. Members of Salisbury’s Project SAFE Neighborhoods Task Force and the Salisbury-Rowan Youth Violence Summit Core Group will be in attendance as well as a dedicated host of council members, law enforcement officers, district attorneys and concerned citizens from throughout the state.

The press event will offer Mayor Kluttz the opportunity to share information regarding local gang activity and to uplift positive intervention and prevention methods currently underway in Salisbury-Rowan. In addition, Mayor Joines, Executive Committee Chair of the North Carolina Metropolitan Coalition, will offer information regarding four key elements of gang activity which run common throughout the state. First, all cities and towns throughout North Carolina are being affected by gang activity regardless of their municipal size and population. Second, it is imperative for communities to “get a handle” on the gang situation before it becomes unmanageable and prevention and intervention no longer work. In addition, Joines will share that as a whole, he and his fellow Mayors have learned that there must be community based gang prevention programs as well as suppression tactics in place. Therefore, the Mayors of NC implore state lawmakers to pass these bills which will attack the criminal acts and structural organization of gangs. Lastly, Mayor Joines will share that the necessary anti-gang legislation defines gangs in criminal statutes and targets gang leaders and gang related crimes.

Prior to taking questions from the media, Salisbury’s Mayor Kluttz will unveil an Anti-Gangs Resolution supported by the 23 mayors and 2.5 million citizens within the ranks of Metropolitan Coalition cities. The resolution will call upon elected legislators to take steps to protect “our children, our towns and our cities” while commending legislators for their increased investment in the judicial branch.

The NC Metropolitan Coalition was established in 2001 and is comprised of 23 of the largest cities in North Carolina. For details regarding the Coalition and its priorities, visit www.ncmetros.org. The City of Salisbury is an equal employment opportunity employer with over 180 different job classifications and 400 full time positions. For more information regarding the City of Salisbury and its services and departments, please visit www.salisburync.gov.

###